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HOW TO PRESERVE

YOUTHFUL LOOKS.

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BY

A WOMAN OF THE WORLD.

Mrs. Laura S. Fitzgerald.

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HOW TO PRESERVE YOUTHFUL LOOKS.

It was a favorite remark of a distinguished writer, that all women had it in their power to make themselves handsome; she might with more truth have said, to make themselves young.

There is a great deal in *making* one's-self young, in determining to be so. I have seen a great deal of the world, and I find invariably, the moment a woman begins to consider herself old, and speak of herself as old, the world makes her out old, and she is old whatever her years.

The *speaking* of the matter betrays a fear, and a consciousness, and not only calls the attention of people, but any constant fear and dread actually has the effect of contracting the brow, and drawing a line between the eyes.

I have sometimes thought what a fortunate thing it would be, if it were possible, for women to forget their age altogether, and for all record of the time of their birth to be obliterated. It is a whimsical idea, but this constant counting of one's years, with the uncomfortable thought that one is getting elderly, tends so much towards producing that very effect. It is not possible to become entirely ignorant of one's actual age, but it is so desirable to put the matter out of one's thought, so far as it can be done.

You feel fresh and young, and enjoy life as much as you

ever did; and so you are young, and should always feel that you are, not allowing it to enter your mind at all, what the world thinks.

I can almost say that this is the one great secret for women to know: that they must *consider themselves* young, for it is very certain if you call yourself old, the world will very readily agree with you. And so long as the period at which we must cease to be called young is not fixed by any definite law, and we see many at forty actually younger than others at twenty-five, it is just as well to consider, and make ourselves young.

It is no disgrace to be sensitive as to our age, and to wish to appear as young as possible; indeed, it seems very much like affectation when ladies pretend to be quite indifferent in regard to the matter.

Many ill-bred and ill-natured people will perhaps remark to you, that "you are not so young as you were," and that "for a person of your age," such and such things are suitable, and other allusions; but such remarks show so mean and narrow a spirit, in the one who makes them, that it is better to put them out of one's mind altogether, not giving them, if possible, even a second thought.

The reply of Madame Dupont was good, when an Englishman, after a conversation on the subject of age, said to her with a sneer but half concealed, "You, Madame, I see, are sensitive about your age." She replied, "I am sensitive to rudeness; I ought, however, to excuse one whose memory concerning the usages of polite society seems to be failing him."

You are conscious you are young, notwithstanding what is said, and you know, too, that these mean remarks result from envy, in one way or another, and so you will think no more of the matter. Sometimes, indeed, it is well when these mean remarks are made, to say plainly, and main-

tain, that whatever the world may say, you consider yourself young. This generally has the effect of persuading people that you are.

I could not, however, advise any one to *put on* young manners. It is best to act just as one chooses, entirely in accordance with one's own feelings, and, if possible, without allowing the consideration of youth, or age, to come into one's thoughts at all.

I feel much confidence in writing these few hints to American ladies, because I have seen much of the world, and after many years of dissipation, find myself still with many admirers, and my age placed by strangers far back of what it really is.

I have found it is not the enjoyment of life and society that makes inroads on the constitution, and marks itself on the countenance.

Of course we must guard against excess, and remember, that rest is as necessary when fatigued after pleasure, as when fatigued after labor.

It is certain more people rust out, than wear out, and that the enjoyment of the sparkle and piquancy of life, has a great effect in preserving the freshness of the form, and the youth and beauty of the face.

A life of dissipation might not be to the taste of all; but this piquancy of life is found in ordinary pleasures, if one will be wide-awake to enjoy one's-self. It is not at all well to lose a taste for pleasure; indeed, I am quite sure, nothing so much tends to settle a person down into premature age, as heaviness and stupidity. I never would allow this in myself for an instant. The moment I felt this heavi-

ness settling upon me, I would rush out, and take a little brisk exercise in the open air.

This exercise makes the blood circulate faster, the spirits are exhilarated, and one is ready for any happiness or gaiety. You feel younger, and you look younger.

Every one must feel conscious in themselves, that when the spirits are settling down into dullness and stupidity, both the face and form are settling down too.

This heaviness and stupidity may result from want of exercise, or indigestion; these should be attended to, and at the same time, we should keep up a taste and fondness for pleasure.

We see every day, in those around us, where this taste has died out, and the women have become humdrum, the face has become settled and old. I have seen this, sometimes, before a person has reached thirty.

And even when people are actually old, I have observed, that if they retain this fondness for pleasure, they are still charming and attractive, they are a drawback on no society, and one forgets in looking at them, that they are not still young.

But at the same time, it is very certain, a youthful look depends very much on a healthful state of the system, and very many little things tend to preserve this healthful state.

These things, it is particularly necessary females should attend to, in order to preserve health and a look of youth. Females, more than the other sex, because their organization is more delicate, and consequently more easily affected.

And for all there are so many things to know and attend to, I find one need not be whimsical, nor let their thoughts rest very much upon the matter.

An excess of labor is wearing upon the system; and labor imposed on the digestive organs, shows itself, or marks its effects, quite as much as work done by the hands. Indigestion is particularly to be guarded against; it gives the face a heavy expression, and before very long a settled look. It has been thought by some, that American girls grow old earlier than others, and that one great cause of it is, the universal custom in America, of eating bread not sufficiently baked. It is well known, that any bread so little baked that a crumb of it, when pressed between the thumb and finger, flattens like a wafer, becomes dough when taken into the stomach. This, of course, produces constipation, from which results a heavy, settled expression, and a strained, wrinkled look about the eyes.

Fine wheat-bread is very good, when it is baked slowly and thoroughly, but it is well sometimes to eat brown bread. This, I find, tends to clear the complexion.

It is very desirable to eat vegetables and fruit each day; this kind of food purifies the blood, and brightens and clears the face.

It is certainly well to eat some meat, and a little fat meat, keeps the form full and flexible. If there is a tendency to irruption, it should be removed by purifying the blood; where there is a decided want of plumpness in the form or face, cream or cod-liver oil, are either very good to take.

In speaking just now of straining the stomach, which of course impairs the fresh, youthful look, I should have remarked, that it is very bad to eat, when one is fatigued, or just before going to bed at night.

I must touch upon the subject of sleep, because I am so very certain, that the brightness of the eyes depends upon one point; it is not perhaps much known, but nothing so surely destroys the brilliancy of the eyes, as sleeping in a close, badly ventilated room. There is no doubt, this dullness of the eyes, more than anything else, gives a faded look to the face. It is such a pity to lose sight of this fact, and to neglect to preserve the brightness of the eyes.

I have seen eyes that were naturally full and clear, utterly spoiled as to beauty, very early in life, by the practice of sleeping where no external air was admitted. If the weather is very cold, a little opening at the window is sufficient, but some fresh air is absolutely necessary. The ill-effect of sleeping in close, bad air, though not perhaps generally noticed, or spoken of by physicians, certainly marks itself in dulling the eye sooner than in any other way.

As for the amount of sleep best to be taken, I find different constitutions require some more, and some less. I can see no special advantage in early rising, except that early in the morning the chemical effects of the sun's rays are greater than at any other time. One becomes much more elastic to be up inhaling the fresh air of the morning.

I think, however, it is wearing upon the system, and consequently upon the face, to exercise much before breakfast.

For my own part, too, I cared so much to preserve my complexion from a thick settled look, that I would never eat before going to bed, or take a nap after a meal; I have found both to be very bad.

A nap in the course of the day is very excellent, when one is up late at night; but to keep the fresh, fair look of the face, it should always be taken before dinner or after lunch.

One should always be covered while they sleep, and at night be comfortably warm, and lie in a straight position; otherwise the blood does not circulate freely, and the system labors.

On the subject of bathing, it seems hardly necessary to speak at all.

It is, I believe, well known, that all the waste of the body is carried off through the skin, the bowels, and the lungs. The skin carries off a larger proportion than either of the others. This fact having been ascertained by careful observation.

If frequent bathing is neglected, the pores of the skin become clogged, and the system labors insensibly, and this of course helps to wear it out, and we know, as the system wears, the face shows it. Indeed, the neglect of bathing frequently shows itself directly on the face, making the skin rough and dark, and not unfrequently, blotches and irruptions result from this cause.

The bowels should frequently be washed with tepid water, and I must add, that it is necessary to use soap frequently. I have made a great deal of observation on this point. *Clear* water does not open and cleanse the pores of the skin. Pure, good soap, with tepid water, is necessary, that the skin may be healthy, and face fresh. Soap should occasionally be used on the face, as well as on the rest of the body. After the application of soap, the skin should always be thoroughly rinsed with cool, fair water.

I find one's hands may be kept very white and smooth in the winter, by washing them in warm water (not hot, this shrivels them), with pure glycerine soap, rinsing them very thoroughly in clear water, and then drying them

carefully with a towel: after this, apply a little weak arnica water, and again use a dry towel, or rub a little powder or dry starch upon them.

The only rule that I have ever observed myself, on the subject of exercise, has been to take it, if possible, in the open air. Even if it is damp, the fresh air is always better and more invigorating than the air of a house. I have found too, that exercise that was pleasant, was most beneficial. A walk with a companion who is agreeable, is better than a solitary walk, and any sport by which the muscles of the arms are strengthened, is far better than any simple exercise in which one takes no interest. I am very sure, that exercise accompanied by enjoyment, does one ten times the good that that does which is performed merely as a duty.

Violent exercise of any kind should always be avoided, and too long walks. It has been observed, by Mr. N. P. Willis, that too much walking makes the eyes hollow and sunken, while riding makes them clear and full.

And I think all women should know, that much exercise, at the time of monthly sickness, is very injurious. One reason why the English women preserve their youthful look so much longer than the women of America, is, because they take better care of themselves at this time.

The look of youth is destroyed sooner by want of care at the time of this sickness, than by almost anything else. Not only should much exercise be avoided, but one should be careful to keep themselves perfectly warm; particularly the feet must be kept warm.

It is my observation, that in cases of obstruction, it is better to bring on the sickness. if possible. by bathing the

feet in warm water. I think iron, and many of the medicines given for this purpose, are apt to thicken the blood.

The feet should be bathed only just before going to bed, and care should be taken, the next day, not to take cold. Indeed, it is never safe to put the feet in warm water during the day. The ill-effect of this may not appear at once, but it will produce difficulty at the monthly sickness.

It is the opinion of physicians, that hardly anything is so injurious to the female constitution, as irregularity in these periods. They might add, that nothing tends more to give the face a worn, faded look.

A state of regularity and health, in this particular, gives so much clearness and youthful freshness to the face; it seems a pity every woman should not pay attention to it, and save herself the risk of growing prematurely old.

I must add, that I find at the time of this sickness, sitting too much on a low seat, is straining and wearing.

The use of a galvanic battery has been recommended to preserve full vitality, and the look of youthful freshness. There is some danger in the use of galvanism, particularly in the case of a sanguine temperament.

The sun-bath is much better than anything else; this suits all constitutions. The azone of the atmosphere, when suffused with the rays of the sun, is not only very vitalizing, but there is no reaction after it, as there might be after electricity.

This sun-bath is taken by lying or reclining on a mattress, in the full sunshine. It is better to take it in the morning, because the chemical rays are more powerful at that time.

If the weather will admit, one should be quite stripped;

and if a bath of soap and water is taken immediately before this, the skin is rendered more susceptible, and receives more readily vitality from the beams of the sun. Nothing, perhaps, is so certain in its effect of producing elasticity in the form, and a look of youth and beauty in the face, as this.

It is well known, that this sun-bath is given daily to the babies in the French hospitals, and that it is much used too, in France, by adults; it is thought to give vivacity to the face, and flexibility to the form. As I said before, the skin should be perfectly clean, to derive entire benefit from the sun's rays. Indeed, the sun-bath should be taken directly after washing with soap and water, while the skin is soft and glowing.

I want to speak of nervousness, very particularly. It seems such a pity, for so many who are possessed of good looks, and might be brilliant, to grow old long before they need to, because they get into the way of being nervous. I mean, by this nervousness, a feeling of irritability. Ill-natured people call it crossness.

When this sense of vexation with the actions of others, or any feeling of annoyance with a piece of work, or anything of that kind comes upon one, it is better to make an effort, and prevent, if possible, this nervous irritability. To leave the work, and forget for the moment the annoyance, in some amusement, is the surest way.

Brooding over any vexation, even if the vexation is trifling, contracts the brow, and affects the muscles of the mouth, making them in time more or less rigid.

I feel that I need not hesitate to say, that this letting the mind dwell continually on anything vexatious, makes

lines and marks years on the face, sooner and more surely than anything else.

One is very certain to meet with annoyances, and often a person becomes quite nervous and irritable without being conscious of it; but the moment you are aware in the least of it coming upon you, it should be noticed and attended to, as much as a headache or indigestion.

A little quinine, or pulsatilla, is good to quiet the nerves. But a better cure, is a little pleasant exercise in the open air. If this cannot be had, anything to amuse one's-self—a story to read, or pleasure of any kind, till the spirits become light and elastic again.

A sudden burst of temper is not half so trying, as this prolonged sense of irritation. Sudden temper, by causing a quick rush of blood to the face, clears the small veins directly under the skin, and leaves for a while, after the first ruddiness, a softened bloom; it also produces a mobility of muscle, which tends to prevent a settling of the features of the face. One should guard against violent passion, however; it is apt to affect the face about the eyes, and often produces the little wrinkles, called crow's-feet.

But of that prolonged and wearing irritability of which I was speaking, I can hardly say too much, guarding you against it; for nothing so fatally and indelibly leaves the mark of age on the face as this.

As I have before said, one ought to cultivate, and keep up a fondness for pleasure. This, more than anything else, keeps smiles on the face, and nothing so much as smiles keeps the face smooth and flexible, preserving, too, the youthful curve of the mouth.

Smiles light the eyes, and not only make a person look younger, but to a face that is really old, they lend a great deal of charming attractiveness.

Of course, I don't speak of artificial smiles, which are

forced, or put on, but I mean, the smiles that come as a matter of course, when the spirits are light, and a person is wide-awake to enjoy pleasure.

I have seen so many faces, that really had no beauty of feature, made so very young and beautiful by a wreath of smiles, that one could scarcely realize that the features were not good; and as I say, the only way to secure this, is by keeping the spirits light.

I should like to suggest to you something about *controlling* the features. I have observed, that always the deep lines or wrinkles, across the forehead, in persons who are not old, are simply caused by the habit of elevating the eyebrows, thereby wrinkling the forehead. It is very unfortunate to fall into this habit, for it is difficult to break, and produces these deep lines across the face, which sometimes are permanent.

I have seen mere children have these lines.

The vertical lines, too, between the eyes, are often the result of inattention. Going out in a bright sunshine, without the eyes shaded, or sitting with the full light from a window before the face, naturally contracts the brow, and marks this line. Any one, coming up Broadway, in the middle day, when the sun is bright, and observing the ladies, as they walk down, with the sun in their faces, will be convinced of this; indeed, I have heard it spoken of, as a characteristic of the ladies of New York.

As a precaution against this habit of drawing the brows together, it is well to observe, that one's bed is not so placed, that any strong light shall come directly in the face, before waking in the morning. Strong light, even when one is asleep, tends to contract the brows.

I have known ladies who thought that a very *fascinating* expression might be cultivated in the eye. It may, perhaps, be done, but in every case where I have known it attempted, a very absurd look is given to the face, because the expression is always exaggerated.

The only possible way of cultivating the expression of the eye, is through the muscles of the mouth; these are very mobile, and without doubt, easily cultivated.

The expression of the mouth not only affects the beauty and look of refinement in the face, but the look of youth. If the mouth is settled and stiff in its expression the face is old; if it is flexible in curve, and graceful in play, the face is young.

The mouth, is the only feature we really can control. Everybody knows, any vexation shows itself at the mouth, and that smiles actually and entirely alter the form of the feature. From this, it would seem, that cultivating the sentiments of the heart would refine and beautify the mouth, and it is really true. The character of a person, as any physiognomist knows, is read better from the mouth, than from any other feature.

Of all the features, the soonest marked by age, is the mouth. But as I have said, if the heart is gay, and light, and young, the face is young, the mouth, particularly, preserving its youthful expression.

There is danger in cultivating a particular expression in the mouth, that the effort will be stiff, and that the expression will be an absurd, exaggerated one. And, too, there is great danger in attempting to imitate the expression of another person; for what is quite becoming to one cast of feature, is often exceedingly unbecoming to another style. So, I could not advise any one to attempt the cultivation of a particular expression of the mouth as a *permanent* effect. It is, however, well known, that the most eminent

dramatic reader in the world, is able to transform her face into one of exquisite loveliness; of course, she cannot change the shape of her nose, or the contour of her face; the change is effected almost wholly through the medium of the mouth.

On the subject of dress, let me say, first thing, it is as bad to affect a very youthful style of dress, as it is to *put on* very young manners. But, as I would beg you not to draw yourself up in a prim, prudish style of acting; so I would say, don't be afraid to wear anything that you like, and that is becoming to you; don't get it into your head for an instant, that such and such things must be worn to suit your age; anything suits your age that is becoming to you.

A white satin hat would not be becoming to a very elderly lady, unless, as is sometimes the case, the complexion still retained its freshness. White, or delicate colors, can be worn by any one, no matter how old they are, if the complexion will admit of it.

It is a great mistake for ladies to suit their dress to their age, or to the opinion of other people, instead of choosing that which is becoming.

It is best to follow the fashion. One can do that, and yet, guided by their own individual taste, have a decided style of their own.

The only article of dress of which I can speak, the fashions changing so continually, is the head dress. An elaborate head dress has always the effect to make a person look old. A flower, a bow of ribbon, or any simple ornament, does not produce this effect.

Nothing should be put on the head, unless it is very

becoming. It is a pity to wear anything, however handsome in itself, that spoils the general effect.

So with the dress,—some can wear a dress profusely trimmed, and look well in it; but a more simple style of making a dress is always more youthful.

There are two things I must not omit to mention, in speaking of this matter of dress; they have so much to do with the expression of the face, and the wearing out of the youthful look.

One of these things is, the wearing the clothes tight around the waist; this, by impeding the circulation, causes a redness and roughness of the skin, and very certainly destroys the fresh, youthful look of the complexion.

Many, knowing this, still have their clothes made very tight, with the idea that it gives them a trim, stylish look; it certainly gives them a trim look, but quite spoils the soft, flexible, graceful style, that gentlemen so much admire.

The other point, of which I wish to speak, is the custom almost universal with ladies, of wearing their skirts without any support from the shoulders. They think if their corsets prevent their clothes from feeling uncomfortable at the waist, that is sufficient; but without a shoulder strap to support, the corsets as well as the skirts press *constantly* and *heavily* upon the most delicate part of the system, and cause the difficulties of which so many women are suffering.

I wonder that physicians are not more strenuous on this point; and I also wonder that ladies are not, when they must see that bearing so hard on their most delicate organs, destroys not only their health, but shows itself at once on the face; not only ruining the complexion, but spoiling the expression, and giving a settled, faded look to the whole face.

In speaking of *taste* in dress, I forgot to remark upon the dressing of the hair. The face is made to look very much younger by dressing the hair in the particular style that best suits the cast of feature.

Every one should give some attention to this point. Curls are becoming to some, and braids to others. It is well always to follow the fashion; but at the same time any little alteration that is becoming, or tends to give a youthful expression, should be adopted. Too elaborate a dressing of the hair, like too elaborate a style of trimming the dress, will almost always be found to make a person look older.

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